

CIA Used Local Police Credentials as 'Cover' in Area Operations

By Allan Frank
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The Central Intelligence Agency has, on at least two occasions, obtained credentials from local police departments for use in operations inside the United States.

During the intensive period of anti-war demonstrations in 1971, CIA security officers borrowed 20 sets of credentials from a local police department for use while infiltrating crowds gathered near CIA offices.

While the CIA has not confirmed which police departments granted the credentials, one source told the Star-News that the Fairfax County Police Department has provided CIA men with badges and badge cases to "cover" agents' activities in the county, where the CIA headquarters building is located at Langley.

THE SOURCE, a Fairfax County policeman who asked not to be identified, said the badges often were those of "sergeant and above" and were kept in reserve for the CIA by a county policeman.

Fairfax Commonwealth's Atty. Robert F. Horan Jr. said, "I've heard it suggested that there were occasions when an individual (from CIA) was given credentials as a cover."

The CIA security officials also are said to have obtained credentials on another occasion in 1971 for use in surveillance of agency employees who were alleged to have been involved in leaking information about foreign intelligence operations.

The agency has been reluctant to disclose its relationships with local police departments.

AS RECENTLY as last week, the CIA declined to identify any of the dozen or so police departments for which it has provided training, other than the five identified in a 1973 article in The New York Times. Those were the departments in New York City, Boston, Washington and Fairfax and Montgomery Counties.

However, ranking officers in Arlington and Alexandria recently verified that officers in those departments also had received training from the CIA at a federal installation in Suitland, Md.

In a Feb. 1 letter to Rep. Edward I. Koch, D-N.Y., CIA Director William E. Colby said, "It serves no purpose to publicize these identities at this time, for among other things,

such publication could hamper current police programs and disclose the identities of certain police personnel in those programs."

AUTHORITATIVE documents obtained by the Star-News did not specify which police department, or departments, handed over credentials to the CIA, but did definitely establish that such transactions had occurred. The credentials reportedly have been destroyed.

The CIA has stated publicly that it terminated cooperative training programs for police departments in early 1973 at the direction of then-Director James R. Schlesinger. In August 1973, Congress amended the Omnibus Crime Control Act to exclude the CIA from assisting local police departments.

While the use of local police credentials is believed to have occurred only while the agency was working with local police departments, at least one congressman believes CIA officials exceeded their authority to protect agency property or conduct surveillance involving foreigners in the United States.

KOCH SAID he believes CIA use of the credentials was illegal under the agency's charter, which precludes involvement in domestic activities. "For them to even simulate or use police credentials in any way domestically would constitute a violation of their basic legislative charter," Koch said. "They are not allowed to engage in domestic law enforcement."

"I'm not an enemy of the CIA. I believe that they have a vital role to play in the area of espionage and counter-espionage overseas," he said, "but in no way should we tolerate their violation of the law. There's no doubt that the CIA has violated both the law itself and the spirit of the law."

Horan, who learned about the possible transfer of credentials during an ongoing investigation of alleged corruption and impropriety in the Fairfax police department, said he believed CIA use of such credentials was illegal.

"IT WOULD NOT be a criminal offense. I don't see anything wrong with it. I don't know what violation of personnel rules it might be," Horan said. "The CIA is a legitimate law enforcement organization and, as far as I know, there is no state or federal statute that might cover this. I guess somebody might be theoretically able to make a case of impersonating a police officer."

Angus MacLean Thuermer, assistant to the director of the CIA, said, "I certainly don't know about that (about the credentials) and I don't know whether we would comment on that sort of thing. That sounds like an operational matter and we seldom, if ever, comment on that sort of thing. It is not our practice to discuss relationships between police departments and the agency, if any."

Col. Richard A. King, who became chief of the Fairfax police department at the beginning of the year, said he had "no personal knowledge" of any credentials being issued to CIA. King added: "I can't confirm or deny it. It would not be a practice I would condone."

FORMER Fairfax Police Chief William L. Durrer, who retired at the beginning of January, said, "As far as I know" the CIA did not receive any credentials. "Now, I didn't deal with them on a day-to-day basis," he added.

King confirmed that his department had no records of any its relationships with the CIA, including any lists of the dozen or so officers it already has acknowledged were trained in lock-picking, electronic surveillance and other techniques by CIA.

While no comprehensive list of the aid CIA has given to local police departments has been made public, the agency has acknowledged it

trained local police officers and occasionally provided anything with it. I their departments with equipment, such as a sophisticated machine that can detect whether a person has held a metal object within 24 hours.

Local police departments also have received a classified manual called "Where's What" that was prepared about 10 years ago by a CIA security officer to assist other federal agencies in their searches for information in the voluminous files maintained by governments, businesses, schools and other institutions.

THAT STUDY was compiled during 1965 and 1966 by a CIA employee holding a federal executive fellowship at The Brookings Institution in Washington, where classified work is prohibited. Brookings officials said they believe the man undertook the work openly and "in good faith," but that his work was classified "confidential" by CIA after he left Brookings and the agency had published the book.

The author, Harry J. Murphy, said "the original understanding with the people I worked for" (the CIA) was that the book would be classified and printed in 1,000 copies. "I don't know whether they (Brookings) knew it was classified."

Brookings officials said that had they known the reference work was intended to be classified, they probably would not have permitted Murphy to use Brookings facilities.

Koch, Edward
CIA 1.01 Colby, Wm.
CIA 1.03 Thuermer
Angus M.
CIA 3.03 Where's
What
SO 4.01.2 Where's
What